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Photo by Pisces Pet Emporium

King Snake

Lampropeltis Sp.

Lifespan: 10 to 15 years.

Size: Adults can reach 2 to 6 feet in length.

Sexing: There are different methods of sexing King snakes: comparing tail lengths, popping, candling, and probing. An experienced veterinarian or breeder should do popping or probing.

Enclosure: King snakes do best in a longer tank that provides them with room to roam around and exercise. A 3x2x2 tank is adequate for a single adult, but a larger 4x2x2 enclosure is better. For a baby or hatchling, a standard 18x18x18 or 24x18x18 with screen top is ideal. King snakes can escape from regular screen tops, so the lid needs to be secured with a lock or a heavy object on the top of the tank. Do not house multiple King snakes together as they are cannibalistic and will eat each other.

Pisces recommends: *ExoTerra All-Glass Terrariums and EcoFlex PVC Reptile lounges.*

Hiding/Climbing Spots: A snake cave or another hiding spot is recommended. Provide a water dish large enough for the snake to curl its entire body into for bathing and to help with shedding as well as a humid hide with moist sphagnum or terrarium moss.

Humidity: The enclosure should be well ventilated and misted well to keep the humidity high (40% to 60%) and to aid the process of shedding and prevent health problems. A moss hide helps maintain an area with high humidity for when the snake is shedding. Use a digital hygrometer to maintain a constant humidity level. **Pisces recommends:** *Exo Terra misting bottle*

Substrate: You can use wood chips and Cyprus mulch designed for snakes. A loose substrate that can hold some humidity and allow for burrowing is recommended **Pisces recommends:** *Zoomed Forest Floor, Zoomed Reptisoil or Exo Terra plantation soil.*

Heat: Maintain a temperature of as low as 23 - 26 °C at night and on the cool side to as high as 28 °C during the day (72 °F to 85 °F with a basking spot of about 90-95°F). Snakes cannot sustain all bodily functions if kept at a constant temperature. Use a heat bulb on one portion of the tank so the snake can escape the warm area if they need to. **Pisces recommends:** *ExoTerra and Arcadia bulbs and fixtures.*

UV Lighting: Use of a full spectrum T5 bulb for 8-10 hours per day is recommended based on research that it can be potentially beneficial to them, but since the snakes are nocturnal, it is not completely necessary. UVB bulbs lose effectiveness and need to be replaced every 8-12 months. **Pisces recommends:** *Arcadia bulbs and fixtures*

Feeding: Feed juveniles about once a week. Adults will eat 1 to 3 adult mice every 7 to 14 days. King snakes will normally eat live prey, but they can be switched to frozen food which is highly

recommended. If you wish to feed frozen be sure that the food is thoroughly thawed before offering it to your snake. Feeding your king snake in a separate tank is important to reduce aggression. Feed prey approximately the maximum girth of the snake.

Vitamins & Supplements: A multi vitamin used about once a month is recommended for optimal health and supplements. ***Pisces recommends: Repashy Calcium Plus LoD.***

Handling: When handling a baby or juvenile King snakes, it is best to pick them up confidently and slowly. To them, you are a much larger predator and if you hesitate or are nervous, it will induce fear in the snake. These are one of the more docile snakes and are calmer than most snakes but can still behave badly when they feel threatened (biting, striking, tail rattling). If this happens when you are handling your king snake, put it back in its tank. King snakes can be head shy so avoid touching its head until you know it's comfortable.

Safe Handling of Reptiles*: As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

Your New Pet: It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness. Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat. A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.

Pisces Recommended Setup:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Glass/PVC terrarium (Exo terra 24x18x18 or Eco Flex 3x2x2 PVC lounge is recommended for a baby and juvenile) ❑ Cave (multiple caves can be provides to increase hiding places as well as provide humid hides to aid in shedding) ❑ Exo Terra misting bottle for maintaining humidity ❑ Exo terra/Zoomed or Pet-Tekk water dish (large enough to soak their entire body) ❑ Jurassic/Zoomed cork rounds/flats for added hiding places and climbing ❑ Jurassic leaf litter for added décor ❑ Exo Terra and Pangea artificial hanging plants can be provided for added foliage and décor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Exo Terra metal feeding tongs ❑ Exo Terra enclosure lock ❑ Zoomed Forest Floor, Zoomed Reptisoil or Exo Terra plantation soil for substrate ❑ Exo Terra 150w Intense Basking Lamp & Flukers 8.5in Dimmable Deluxe Clamp Lamp ❑ Arcadia T5 Pro 6% D3+ UVB kit (if provided) ❑ Repashy Calcium Plus LoD ❑ Feeder Mice ❑ Exo Terra digital thermometer and hydrometer or combometer ❑ Jurassic sphagnum moss or terrarium moss for humid hide |
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**Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*